

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, November 20, 2009

Notes from the Commissioner:

Community [forums](#) scheduled on Race to the Top

Seeking comments on RIDE [strategic plan](#)

From the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE):

[USDA](#) encourages planning regarding access to meals during public-health emergencies – **RESPONSE REQUIRED!**

Bristol Warren teacher's [certification](#) revoked

Regents approve revised Rhode Island [Nutrition Requirements](#)

Other:

Energy company announces [scholarships](#) for high-school seniors

American Association of School Administrators seeks [award](#) nominees

Attachments to this field memo:

Draft Strategic Plan 11/19/09

Notes from the Commissioner

Community forums scheduled on Race to the Top

We have had excellent turnout at our first two community forums on the Rhode Island Race to the Top application. Thanks to those of you who have joined me at these events! I have received helpful feedback from many educators and community members, and I am confident that these forums are building strong public support for our priorities for transforming Rhode Island education.

We have scheduled three more forums, and I encourage you to notify your community about these events:

- Monday, Nov. 23rd @ 6 p.m. Toll Gate High School, 575 Centerville Rd., Warwick
- Wednesday, Dec. 2nd @ 6 p.m. SORICO, 646 Camp Ave., North Kingstown
- Monday, Dec. 7th @ 6 p.m. Central High School, 70 Fricker St., Providence

I hope to see you and members of your community at these forums.

Seeking comments on RIDE strategic plan

As you know, over the past several months, we have been working to develop our priorities for transforming Rhode Island education and a strategic plan to achieve our goals. The plan will guide our work and will determine how we direct our resources over the next three to five years. The plan will be specific, measurable, and public.

We have developed a draft of the plan based on a lot of feedback that I have gathered, from educators and from members of the

public, during my district visits, from a feedback form on our Web site, and from many community meetings.

I presented a draft version of this plan to the Regents at their work session this week, and I hope to present them with a revised draft at their December meeting.

I am attaching a copy of the plan to this field memo. Please share it with the members of your community. I strongly encourage engagement and feedback from you and your community on this plan, and I hope to have your enthusiastic support as we put this plan into place. With your help, we will use this plan to focus our energy on achieving our priorities and advancing learning for all students!

From RIDE:

USDA encourages planning regarding access to meals during public-health emergencies – RESPONSE REQUIRED!

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging all LEAs to develop emergency-response plans to ensure that children eligible for free/reduced-price meals have access to meals if schools are closed or dismissed because of public-health emergencies.

The USDA is allowing RIDE to waive certain requirements so that schools have the ability to provide meals during unexpected school closings, specifically relating to an H1N1 outbreak.

We do not anticipate the need to close schools because of the H1N1 virus. If schools were to close, however, this could have a serious effect for children eligible for free or reduced-price meals

who rely on school meals for a significant portion of their daily nutrition.

The RIDE Office of Finance has created two forms that you must fill out in response to this notification from USDA.

For access to the forms and for further information, please see:

[http://www.esnacs.ride.ri.gov/esnacs.aspx/Documents_Manager/H1N1%20COVER%20MEMO%20\(2\)_726.doc](http://www.esnacs.ride.ri.gov/esnacs.aspx/Documents_Manager/H1N1%20COVER%20MEMO%20(2)_726.doc)

Bristol Warren teacher's certification revoked

I issued the following notice on November 12th:

Please be advised that the Rhode Island elementary teaching certificate issued to

Kathleen A. Borgia

has been revoked for cause as of this date. For more information in this matter, please contact Paul E. Pontarelli, Esq., in the Office of Legal Counsel (222-8976).

Regents approve revised Rhode Island Nutrition Requirements

At its meeting on November 5th, the Board of Regents approved revised Rhode Island Nutrition Requirements, effective immediately. These revised requirements phase in the goal regarding the use of whole grains in meals that school food-service programs prepare and serve. Here is a link to the revised requirements:

http://www.esnacs.ride.ri.gov/esnacs.aspx/documents_manager/rinrv2_717.doc

If you have questions about these requirements, you may e-mail the RIDE child-nutrition program coordinator:

Becky.Bessette@ride.ri.gov

Other:

Energy company announces scholarships for high-school seniors

I have received notice of this scholarship opportunity:

Proton Energy Systems announced is launching a \$1 million scholarship program aimed at high school seniors across the nation. The Proton Energy Scholarship will recognize and award high school seniors who demonstrate outstanding achievement, excellence and promise in the field of science or technology, and who plan to pursue higher education in this field.

The scholarship program is supported and funded by Tom Sullivan, owner of Proton Energy and founder of the national chain Lumber Liquidators. The scholarship will award four-year undergraduate scholarship prizes with a total value of up to \$100,000 each. Honorable Mentions, Proton Energy Achievers, will be awarded \$500 prizes. Sullivan has committed \$1 million to the Hydrogen Education Foundation (HEF), who is administering the scholarship program.

Deadline for applications is February 10, 2010. Winners will be announced on April 15, 2010.

For more information on the Proton Energy Scholarship, application guidelines, and to apply, visit www.ProtonEnergyScholarship.org .

American Association of School Administrators seeks award nominees

The American Association of School Administrators is seeking nominees for its 2010 National School Change Awards. The association will select 25 finalists and will present \$5,000 to six awardees.

A downloadable application form and more information is available on the association Web site, www.npli.org/nsca.